

this is to uplift the diverse voices of our communities through representation. This year, there are a record 21 AA NH/PI Members serving in Congress, and we celebrate the historic election of KAMALA HARRIS to be the first woman and the first Asian American to hold the Office of the Vice President. However, even with today's progress, our AA NH/PI communities continue to face issues of disparity and prejudice.

This year, we once again commemorate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month amid a global pandemic. While the pandemic has claimed the lives of more than half a million Americans, COVID-19 has had an outsized impact on communities of color, including Pacific Islanders, who are three times more likely to contract COVID-19 and are nearly twice as likely to die from the disease. The pandemic has also exposed and exacerbated social and economic disparities in our country. Throughout the pandemic, Pacific Islanders and other vulnerable groups have been disproportionately impacted by unemployment, food and income insecurity, and unstable or inadequate housing, among other hardships. This pandemic has highlighted the work we must do to ensure that all Americans, especially individuals from marginalized communities, have access to quality healthcare, fair pay, workplace protections, and other civil and human rights.

Violence and discrimination against Asian Americans have also surged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 2020 and March 2021, Stop AAPI Hate received over 6,600 reports of discrimination and hate incidents across all 50 States and the District of Columbia. These unprovoked, random attacks can happen anywhere—on public transportation, on sidewalks, in businesses, and even in the workplace.

The dramatic rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans might be a recent development, but we all know that racism has never been far beneath the surface in our country. Part of honoring the rich history of the AA NH/PI community includes reflecting on some of the darker moments in our Nation's past. AA NH/PIs have always been targeted as the "other" in our country and have been treated as the perpetual "foreigner." Since the first Asian immigrants came to our country nearly two centuries ago, our communities have experienced race-based prejudice and have been subject to discriminatory policies that impinged on individuals' civil rights, improperly rescinded wartime promises, and excluded immigrants from Asian countries out of intolerance and fear.

Recognizing the recent increase of hate crimes, Representative Grace Meng and I introduced legislation to focus attention on hate crimes committed during the pandemic. Last week, President Biden signed this bill, the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, into law. This action sent a clear message

of solidarity to our AA NH/PI communities at a crucial moment. This bipartisan legislation will help Federal, State, and local governments confront hate in our country and help victims of hate crimes to come forward.

Today, AA NH/PIs are uniting to confront this epidemic of racism, discrimination, and hate. We are marching, speaking out, and demanding action in cities and states across the Nation to ensure that our country does not repeat the mistakes of the past. Representation and visibility are some of the ways we are making our voices heard. However, we must also sustain efforts to teach empathy and educate others about our history. We can help to create a more just and equitable society by raising awareness of past injustices and current issues of importance to our communities.

As we celebrate the contributions of AA NH/PIs, there is also clear evidence demonstrating how much work remains to be done. I look forward to working with my colleagues beyond the month of May, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, to continue the work that must be done to advance civil rights and equal treatment for all.

DRINKING WATER AND WASTE-WATER INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2021

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to voice my strong support for the recent passage of S. 914, the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021. I believe it is a vital investment in the current and future health of all our communities, and I applaud my Senate colleagues for helping to get this done.

Ensuring access to clean water is essential—and one of the most basic duties of government. Every American deserves safe drinking water and wastewater treatment systems, and in my home State of Maryland, these systems are vital both to the health of our fellow citizens and to the health of our rivers and our beloved Chesapeake Bay.

This bill will help pull our waterways into the 21st century by providing a critical boost in water systems investments to restore aging infrastructure, fund cutting-edge waterway technology, create resiliency in the face of climate change, and create new jobs. And critically, this legislation was designed with equity in mind, so marginalized communities can benefit from this big leap forward. This has been a longstanding bipartisan priority, and I am pleased that colleagues from both sides of the aisle have come together to pass this vital legislation through the U.S. Senate.

Now, it is up to our colleagues in the House to pass this bill too so we can get it to the President's desk. And should he sign it into law, as I believe he will, I will be doing my part as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure we fully fund this initiative.

I thank my colleagues for joining me and a bipartisan group of Senators in supporting this key investment in our Nation's water infrastructure.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO RANDY GORDON

• Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate Randall "Randy" C. Gordon on his retirement from the National Grain and Feed Association, NGFA, after nearly 43 years of service.

A native Nebraskan, Randy graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, UNL, with undergraduate degrees in journalism, history, and political science. After college, Randy worked at UNL's Agricultural Communications Department and freelanced for the Omaha World-Herald.

Randy's NGFA story began on July 1, 1978, when he was hired as the director of information services. In 1987, he was promoted as NGFA's vice president for communications and government relations. A voracious reader and writer, in 1996, Randy authored a history of the first 100 years of the NGFA for its centennial celebration, entitled "A Century of Agricultural Abundance Through Free Enterprise." In 2005, the Food and Drug Administration awarded Randy for his contributions to preventing the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, in the United States. In 2012, Randy became president and CEO of NGFA. Through more than four decades of NGFA service, Randy has made countless contributions to the U.S. agricultural industry.

As the senior senator from Nebraska, I congratulate Randy on a successful and impactful career representing crucial aspects of the agricultural value chain. Randy, I wish you, your wife Barbara, and your children and grandchildren good health as you enter retirement. You have done Nebraska proud. •

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF KIWANIS CLUB OF MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the Kiwanis Club of Minot, ND, as well as the 100-year birthdays of two Kiwanis members, ND, constituents, Mr. Lynn Aas and Mr. John Sinn.

Since its founding on May 27, 1921, the Kiwanis Club of Minot has helped make my home town a better place to live. As a former member of this organization, I deeply appreciate their continued dedication and contributions to the community and surrounding area. Some examples of their work include donating books to schools, supporting the arts, and raising money for local service organizations, like the Boy Scouts and the Juvenile Drug Court and Domestic Violence Crisis Center. In these ways, Minot's local Kiwanis